

WORKING WITH THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An advisory committee is a group of business, industry, community and school-related people who help you keep your program on track. With appropriate management, it can provide both guidance and support. Use your committee and its members to help you develop, design and deliver a quality program.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Gain an understanding of **advisory committee functions** (p. 18-2) and operations. Talk with experienced agricultural educators and, if possible, observe other programs' committees.
2. Set up your advisory committee using a **step-by-step process for advisory committee implementation** (p. 18-4). Even if your program's advisory committee is already established, review the steps to ensure everything has been covered.
3. Ensure **success with your advisory committee** (p. 18-5) through clear communication, effective management and meaningful involvement.
4. Record related information on the **Advisory Committee Member Information** (p. 18-7) and **Advisory Committee Subcommittees** (p. 18-8) forms.

IN THIS SECTION

<i>Tips:</i>	
Advisory Committee Functions	18-2
<i>Checklist:</i>	
Step-by-Step Advisory Committee Implementation	18-4
<i>Tips:</i>	
Pointers for Success with Your Advisory Committee	18-5
<i>Sample:</i>	
Advisory Committee Agenda—First Meeting	18-6
<i>Form:</i>	
Advisory Committee Member Information	18-7
<i>Form:</i>	
Advisory Committee Subcommittees	18-8

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

Members of your agricultural education advisory committee play an important and necessary role in the development of a successful agricultural education program. Members must also understand from the beginning that the committee has no administrative policy-making or legislative authority.

A well-functioning advisory committee will—

- Evaluate the current agricultural education program to determine if it is providing realistic and current preparation and training for students.
 - ♦ Review all features of the program—goals, competencies, curriculum, lesson plans and classroom and lab formats—and evaluate overall program effectiveness.
 - ♦ Assist in conducting surveys and interpreting survey data.
 - ♦ Identify the most recent educational and employment trends in specific businesses and industries, and determine those agricultural education programs needed to provide preparation for jobs in the community.
 - ♦ Provide advice on the establishment and maintenance of a realistic agricultural education program.
 - ♦ Provide advice about curricula content, training techniques and equipment.
 - ♦ Investigate the types of facilities and equipment currently used in business and industry.
 - ♦ Assist in the preparation and selection of course materials.
 - ♦ Research and explain technical information.
 - ♦ Inform school personnel of changes in the labor market.
- ♦ Determine student and community interest in cooperative education and adult classes.
- ♦ Inform the school about business and industry personnel needs.
- Act as a change agent to increase the agricultural education program's relevance.
 - ♦ Follow up on recommendations made to agricultural education coordinators, instructors, administrators and the local board of education.
 - ♦ Research and recommend changes in agricultural education programs.
 - ♦ Suggest new or modified curricula.
- Help secure training stations and assist in the placement of program graduates.
 - ♦ Assist with the development of student placement programs.
 - ♦ Assist and counsel students preparing to enter the job market.
 - ♦ Identify places for internships and cooperative work experiences.
 - ♦ Recommend policies for internships and cooperative work programs.
 - ♦ Provide advice on types of students best suited for participating in cooperative work programs.
 - ♦ Assist in implementing procedures to provide students release time for part-time jobs.

continued

- Provide input and support for legislation and corresponding funding at the local, state and federal levels.
 - ♦ Suggest and support local, state and national action regarding agricultural education programs: attend legislative meetings, write letters, promote agricultural education programs.
 - ♦ Provide financial assistance to agricultural education programs: arrange for donations, establish student scholarships and awards.
- Act as a communications link to assist in the development of community understanding of and support for the agricultural education program.
 - ♦ Encourage cooperation and a better understanding of agricultural education programs among employers, students and the general public.
 - ♦ Develop plans for recognizing outstanding students.
 - ♦ Serve as a communications link within the community.
- Provide a service to the agricultural education program.
 - ♦ Assist in securing meeting places for adult classes, advisory committee meetings, competitive events and special demonstrations.
 - ♦ Recommend resource personnel, guest speakers and instructors for agricultural education programs.
 - ♦ Serve as judges for local awards and contests.
 - ♦ Help plan special events: Vocational Education Week, National Student Organization Week, competitive events, banquets and other social activities.

Source: Shinn, L. (1988). *Advisory Committees: A Guide for Organization and Use*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western Publishing.*

CHECKLIST

STEP-BY-STEP ADVISORY COMMITTEE IMPLEMENTATION

BE CONVINCED OF THE NEED FOR AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

- ☐ Study the duties, functions and advantages of an advisory committee.
- ☐ Visit advisory committees in operation.
- ☐ Talk to administrators at a school where a successful advisory committee is in operation.

SECURE APPROVAL.

- ☐ Explain the function of an advisory committee to administrators. Point out the local need for, and advantages of, the advisory committee. Provide examples of schools where advisory committees are successfully operating.
- ☐ Show how an advisory committee will be an asset to administrators, the school and yourself.
- ☐ Ask for administrators' assistance in preparing final plans for presentation to the board of education.
- ☐ Present plans to the board of education.
- ☐ Outline specific purposes of the advisory committee. Point out that it is not a pressure or lobby group, but merely addresses problems.
- ☐ Explain that the board of education may designate a member to sit in on all committee meetings.

SELECT AND CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

- ☐ Prepare a list of people from which committee members will be selected. Work with the superintendent and/or the board of education to make the final selection. Be sure to include business, industry, community and school-related people. Include some "nonusers"—people who have not had close ties to your program in the past.
- ☐ Contact selected members and determine whether they are interested in serving.
- ☐ Visit all members who accept a position on the committee. Answer their questions about the overall program. Check on possible times to hold the first meeting.
- ☐ Arrange for the secretary of the board of education to write personal letters of notification, signed by the board president, to each newly selected committee member.

CALL THE FIRST MEETING.

- ☐ Avoid time conflicts as much as possible.
- ☐ Stress the importance of attendance.
- ☐ Mail reminder cards to committee members, and call them the day before the meeting.
- ☐ See page 18-6 for a sample agenda.

Source: Shinn, L. (1988). *Advisory Committees: A Guide for Organization and Use*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western Publishing.*

POINTERS FOR SUCCESS WITH YOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Send a letter to each new committee member, signed by the highest possible school official, appointing the representative to the committee.
- Provide biographical information about the chairperson and other members of the committee to each new member.
- Communicate your program's purpose and goals so committee members can provide on-target advice and guidance.
- Tell committee members exactly what is expected of them in the way of advice, assistance, cooperation and time. Provide a written position description.
- Familiarize committee members with education staff and the school environment.
- Continually provide committee members with information concerning educational developments at the local, state and national levels.
- Occasionally invite committee members to attend school functions, board of education meetings or state board meetings.
- Inform committee members of happenings in other schools and school systems.
- Demonstrate your own enthusiasm for and commitment to the committee's role in improving your program.
- Invite committee members to the school, and be willing to spend some time with them.
- Provide opportunities for representatives to meet with students several times during the school year.
- Select a representative from each graduating class to serve as an ex-officio member for one year to help determine the effectiveness of committee action.
- Form subcommittees of three to four members to address specific issues and accomplish specific tasks.
- Schedule meetings at a convenient time, preferably at the school.
- Notify committee members of meetings at least two weeks in advance.
- Keep meetings within a reasonable time limit. Industry and business representatives are accustomed to crisp, business-like procedures.
- Before each meeting, provide members with an agenda containing a brief background statement of the problems to be discussed and possible solutions for each.
- Provide recognition in newspaper articles, presentations, your program's annual report and at the annual FFA chapter banquet.

Sources: Hutt, R. (1979, October). "Get the Most Out of Marketing and D.E. Advisory Committees," *The Balance Sheet*, pp. 58-62. Shinn, L. (1988). *Advisory Committees: A Guide for Organization and Use*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western Publishing Co.*



Advisory Committee and Planning Checklist

Building quality programs and putting school-to-career in action

Teachers: An advisory committee can assist you in establishing program goals, meeting student needs and planning instruction. Use this checklist to get the most benefit out of a local advisory committee.

Key Points for Establishing an Advisory Committee:

- ☐ Ask yourself why you need an advisory committee. Set expectations for the committee and yourself.
- ☐ Secure administration and school board approval.
- ☐ Select committee members. Be sure to include a representative from each partner group—parents, students, school officials and community members. Involve community members who have no knowledge of your program. They can help you and other members see program weaknesses that need to be addressed.
- ☐ Send a formal letter inviting committee members to serve. Personally obtain a confirmation from each person.
- ☐ At the first meeting, explain expectations and determine goals.
- ☐ Prepare and deliver agendas prior to all meetings.
- ☐ Continually recognize members for their involvement.

Top Four Advisory Committee Contributions:

- ☐ Recruit students.
- ☐ Improve curriculum.
 - Gather tools, equipment, instructional resources and facilities.
 - Evaluate overall program effectiveness.
 - Assist in preparing and selecting course materials.
 - Recommend resources or guest speakers for courses.
 - Offer resources to assist the teacher's professional growth.
- ☐ Employ and train students.
 - Help secure training stations and placement of program graduates.
 - Identify employment trends in specific industries or career pathways.
 - Identify SAE and other work-based learning opportunities.
 - Serve as judges or chaperones for FFA and SAE activities.
- ☐ Publicize the program.
 - Recognize outstanding students.

Source: Dr. John Mundt, associate professor, University of Idaho Boise Center, Idaho; *New Teacher Owner's Manual*